

UP FRONT FOR THE CIA

by Robert T. Wood

Without Cloak or Dagger, by Miles Copeland. Simon and Schuster, \$8.95 (July).

MILES COPELAND is an old whore. This is not the libelous statement it seems, as anyone with Mr. Copeland's background well knows. In the Central Intelligence Agency, "old whore" is a term used to describe an officer so experienced, so devoted to his trade, so loyal to his organization, and so accustomed to following orders that he will accept and do a creditable job on any assignment without regard for moral, ethical, or possibly even legal considerations. Within the Agency it is a high compliment to professionalism.

No outsider can be sure Mr. Copeland qualifies for the title, of course, because the most ambiguous aspect of this latest book on the CIA is the status of its author. An alumnus of the wartime OSS, Mr. Copeland claims he served as a consultant to the newly formed CIA and was called back from time to time thereafter to review the systems he had devised. He never claims to have been a staff employee of the Agency, yet he says that espionage has occupied most of his working life. In 1957 he established himself in Beirut as a security consultant, which, he alleges, is still his occupation today, but his knowledge of the Agency and its workings is both intimate and up-to-the-minute.

To ask Mr. Copeland when, exactly, his employment with the CIA ended might be a little like asking David Eisenhower how much rent he pays.

The temptation to compare Miles Copeland to Victor Louis is irresistible. A mysterious Russian who began as a small-time black marketer moving about on the fringes of the foreign community in Moscow, Louis landed an assignment as correspondent for a London newspaper and made several trips outside the Soviet Union, rushing in to places, like Taipei, where Russian diplomats feared to tread. The speculation, which will probably never be confirmed, is that he obtained his unusual privileges and freedom of movement by virtue

Robert T. Wood worked for the CIA for seventeen years.

of his relationship with the KGB department of misinformation, whose mission it is to mislead the rest of the world concerning Russian capabilities and intentions. Like Victor Louis, Miles Copeland is a highly visible and easily accessible person of nebulous status who can go places and say things that responsible officials cannot. Mr. Copeland, who on at least one occasion has said things about CIA activities that responsible officials later had to deny, has been described by one journalist as "the only man I know who uses the CIA as a cover."

MR. COPELAND has written this book, he says, to counter a flood of misinformation on spies and counterespies that appears on television, in movies, books, magazine articles, and newspapers. To give him his due there is more inside information on the subject presented here than has probably ever appeared publicly in one place. To begin with, Mr. Copeland makes it clear that espionage is a relatively minor source of intelligence information, although the clandestine services often seem to be the tail that wags the dog, and of course the descriptions of them make the best reading. His explanations of the planning and organization of a penetration operation and of the procedure for developing, recruiting, and handling an agent are in some cases overelaborate and in others oversimplified, but generally they are accurate. The account of the position and operation of the CIA field station, cataloguing many of the problems faced by a CIA officer serving overseas, will be new to most readers and might even be instructive for foreign-service officers and foreign correspondents who thought they knew all there was to know. Add to this a text liberally salted with footnotes—most of them fascinating anecdotes in their own right—and the result is an interesting and readable book.

Unfortunately, the large quantities of good information in *Without Cloak or Dagger* serve as a vehicle for an equal amount of misinformation on the Agency, more misinformation, in fact, than all that's been

areas." The implication is that both Peking and Moscow are swarming with CIA spies and that no state secret is safe from them.

The facts as I was exposed to them were vastly different. In the days before I began to worry about becoming an old whore myself, I served for several years at a station with considerably more than three case officers. During one particularly hectic summer, I met regularly with and handled no fewer than twenty agents, one of them with an additional five subagents. My workload had been expanded by taking on handholding chores for some operations of my colleagues who were on home leave,

* Mr. Copeland corrects a popular misconception by explaining that staff CIA employees are almost never designated as agents, in the sense that FBI officers are known as "special agents." In intelligence an agent is someone, usually a foreign national, hired to provide information or perform other services. The staff employee who contacts and directs him, and in general handles his "case," is known as a "case officer."